



The Old Fliers' Group

Attached to the Royal Aero Club of WA (Inc).

Coordinator: Brian John, Ph 9883 8001

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Last Meeting

Parking

The parking problems that have developed over recent months were largely overcome by use of the "courier car" that circulated through the nearby car-parks from about 11.45 to 12.15 pm. Patrons made use of the car, which was identified by a sheet of white paper displayed in the top left corner of the windscreen. The service will be provided at the start and finish of future meetings. Feel free to use it.

Spotted

Spotted at the last meeting were two ex-Royal Aero Club instructors, Greg Wilson and Graham Hartree. Both are captains with senior positions in Emirates. They try to visit Perth as often as possible. Some time in the future we may get one, or both, to tell us how they fly the Boeing 777.

Mini Speaker

The August Mini Speaker was Ted Fletcher. He began by giving a background to Ray Parer and John McIntosh, the famous pair who flew from England to Australia in 1920 – it took them seven months! On Saturday, April 2, 1921, John McIntosh was involved in the first fatal aircraft accident in Western Australia. He had obtained two Avro 504Js from Major Norman Brearley and after a short period of instruction proceeded on a barnstorming tour of country towns.

McIntosh arrived in Pithara to carry passengers on joyrides and late in the afternoon on that fateful day. While at about 500 feet with two passengers on board, the engines stopped and the Avro spun into the ground at Brown's Paddock, killing McIntosh and Alfred Joy, one of the two passengers.

Ted related that, many years later, new information came to hand that varied greatly with that presented at the official inquest. The new evidence suggested that the aircraft ran out of fuel.

If you are passing through the district, with time to spare, you may wish to visit Brown's Paddock to view the substantial monument on the site.

Footnote:

About a year later, Ray Parer also got into newspapers in Western Australia. On Tuesday February 7, 1922, after a few days of giving joyrides in Kalgoorlie and Boulder in his FE-2b, his aircraft suffered an engine failure at low altitude while taking off at Boulder. He crashed into Burt Street, Boulder injuring himself and his passenger.

Speaker of the Day

The *Speaker of the Day* was Ken Pittman who told the story of how the DC-3, which is currently on display at the Bullcreek Aviation Museum, went close to being used as a target for a new type of bomb that was to be trialed by the Australian Defence Forces. At that time, Ken was a Flt Lt working as pilot and instructor at Pearce. The particular DC-3 (one of two set for destruction) had spent most of its life in WA and had only flown 11 000 hours. Private interests and established aviation museums had attempted to obtain the DC-3s for commemorative purposes. (Truth was that, while other aircraft could be used in the test, the DC-3s were flyable and could be easily flown to the test site).

Ken came across some "sensitive" information which he thought should be brought to the public's attention. When the news of the wanton destruction of the aircraft appeared in the newspapers, Ken was challenged by the RAAF bureaucracy and charged under the infamous Section 40 of the RAAF Air Force Act.

In the ensuing months, the media all over the country published story after story in support of the preservation of the DC-3s. Ken was found guilty, as charged, and given a severe reprimand – but, thanks to Ken's efforts (which turned out to be career limiting) the Government and the RAAF had a change of heart. The DC-3s were reprieved and one now stands proud at the Bullcreek Aviation Heritage Museum.

Thanks go to both speakers for the enthusiastic delivery of their stories.

Gatherings

By the time you get this Bulletin it will be too late to attend "The Gathering of Mustangs and Legends" to be held on Sept 27 – 30 at Rickenbacker Field, Columbus, Ohio. Over 100 Mustangs are expected to attend along with 51 Legends – comprising of Aces, pilots and other personnel who form part of the P-51 family. They will celebrate the 65th birthday of this famous aircraft.

Next Meeting

At the September meeting the *Speaker of the Day* will be Hilly Rostowsky who was a Fleet Air Arm pilot and he will tell us about carrier landings in jet aircraft. The *Mini Speaker*, David Bennett, will take us on a night flight to Berlin in a Lancaster.

I hope to see you at the Royal Aero Club at noon on Friday September 28th for a relaxing lunch.

Brian Hernan